

INSPECTION REPORT

SOMERVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wallasey

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105000

Headteacher: Mrs A Ellison

Lead inspector: Mrs E Linley

Dates of inspection: 12th – 14th April 2005

Inspection number: 267684

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	482
School address:	Northbrook Road Wallasey Merseyside
Postcode:	CH44 9AR
Telephone number:	0151 6385074
Fax number:	1051 6391019
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Andrews
Date of previous inspection:	19 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Somerville Primary School is situated in Wallasey, a highly populated urban area of the Wirral. The school serves an area of high unemployment and an above average percentage (47 per cent) of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Children enter the reception class in the September prior to their fifth birthday. Most children have received some nursery experience before starting school, and many have attended Oscar's pre-school provision that is situated in the school grounds. When children start in the reception class their attainment is generally well below what might be expected nationally. 482 girls and boys attend Somerville Primary School. There are two pupils whose first language is believed not to be English. The school has 164 pupils on its list of pupils with special educational needs and this is well above the national average. Of these, three have a formal statement of Special Educational Need. Somerville Primary School was awarded 'Investors in People', the 'Basic Skills' award and 'Eco-school' award in 2001, all of which were assessed and renewed in 2004. In addition, the school received a 'School Achievement' award in 2002 and 'the Activemark Gold' in 2004. In 2004 they received the 'Healthy Schools' award and the school is currently working successfully towards 'Artsmark Gold'.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27281	Mrs E Linley	Lead inspector	Religious education and music.
9649	Mrs J Smith	Lay inspector	
11371	Mr F Ravey	Team inspector	English, history, special educational needs and English as an additional language.
21585	Mr A Kingston	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology and geography.
19226	Mr S Flood	Team inspector	Science, art and design and design and technology.
22359	Mrs J Harvard	Team inspector	Foundation Stage and physical education.

The inspection contractor was:

Focus Education (UK) Limited
113 – 115 High Street
Uppermill
Saddleworth
OL3 6BD

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 & 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school with very good features. As a result of good leadership and management and good teaching overall, pupils achieve well over time. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good overall. However, there is inconsistent use of assessment information to ensure that more able pupils are effectively challenged.
- Leadership, management and governance are good.
- The curriculum is good overall and its enrichment is excellent.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is very good; by the age of 11, pupils attain above expectations for their age.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Although the school works hard to promote good attendance, it is well below the national average.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.
- Pupils' behaviour is good; their attitudes to learning and relationships in school are very good.

The school has improved well since its last inspection. The key issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been addressed. Improvements have been made to leadership and management which are now good. Of particular importance is the improvement made to pupils' behaviour and the provision for pupils' social development particularly at dinner time. Pupils' behaviour is now good. Other improvements include the very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. Improvements have also been made in the provision for ICT; it is now very good and by the age of eleven, pupils attain above average standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	D	C	C
mathematics	E	D	D	C
science	D	D	D	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is good during their time in school. Attainment on entry to school is well below what might be expected nationally. Children make a good start in Reception and they achieve well during their year in the Foundation Stage. Although standards have improved overall by the end of Reception, they are likely to remain well below the expected levels in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and below expectations for personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Pupils achieve well overall in Years 1 and 2 and by the age of seven, standards are average in reading and below average in writing, mathematics and science. This represents an improvement from the 2004 national tests for pupils aged seven. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory overall, this is because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. However, achievement improves where teaching and learning are of a consistently good and better quality and so, by the age of 11, the majority of pupils attain standards that are average in reading, below average in writing, mathematics and science. This paints a similar

picture to the results of the 2004 tests for eleven year olds. However, an issue at that time in mathematics and science was the achievement of more able pupils and this stills remains. The lack of challenge by some teachers to ensure these pupils achieve as well as they can, and use of assessment to aid planning for pupils' needs are the main reasons for this outcome. Standards in ICT have improved. Pupils in Year 2 attain in line with expectations, and above expectations for their age by Year 6. Standards in religious education match those prescribed by the syllabus in local schools and are in line with expectations in music throughout school. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language achieve well.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

Pupils' personal development is good; they have very positive attitudes towards learning and their behaviour is good. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance is well below the national average and punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The majority of teachers make very good use of teaching assistants, who in turn make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Teachers use an effective range of assessment strategies to track pupils' progress. Where teaching is good or better it is used well to meet pupils' needs. However, it is not used well enough by some teachers to meet the needs of more able pupils. This, plus management of pupils' behaviour, was a key area for development where one lesson during the inspection was observed to be poor. The school provides a good curriculum and its enrichment is excellent. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and resources are good. The school provides a good level of care for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Links with parents are good. Links and partnerships with the community, colleges and other schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is good and she is supported well by key staff. Management of the school is good. The school uses well the evidence it gains from self-evaluation to inform its strategic planning. The management of the provision for special educational needs is very good. Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and ensure that all statutory responsibilities are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views about the school. They particularly value the quality of support offered for children and for parents. Some parents felt that issues of 'bullying' were not always dealt with as well as they could be. Inspection evidence indicates that the school deals with incidents effectively and that pupils' behaviour overall has much improved since the last inspection. Pupils hold very positive views about their school and they particularly enjoy the range of extra curricular activities that are available to them. However, some parents and pupils expressed concerns about the quality of the mobile classrooms. Inspection evidence shows that the school has invested wisely in its refurbishment by replacing the toilets and repairing the roof. However, inspectors agree that there is still work to be done in respect to furniture and resources that impact directly on the quality of the learning environment that the classrooms provide.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Continue the work in improving attendance.
- Ensure that information gathered from assessments is used effectively and consistently to meet the needs of more able pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards achieved are **good** over time. By the age of eleven, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. However, given the children's low starting point when they begin school, this equates to good achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- From a low start children achieve well overall.
- More able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should in mathematics and science.
- The achievement of a small minority of pupils is adversely affected by their poor attendance.
- By the age of 11, pupils attain above average expectations in ICT.
- Pupils' skills in investigational science have improved.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. The school's results in the national tests for seven year olds in 2004 showed that, overall, standards were well below average in reading and mathematics and in the lowest five per cent in writing. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was average in reading and mathematics and very low in writing.

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.0 (15.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	11.0 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.8 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 76 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Key Stage 2

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.8 (25.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.6 (25.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.2 (27.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 66 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The school's results in the 2004 national tests for 11 year olds showed that standards in English were average. They were below average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, and in relation to pupils' prior attainment, standards were average in English and mathematics and below average in science. The trends of improvement over the last four years are below the national average in national tests for pupils in Year 2 and broadly in line with the national average for pupils in Year 6.
3. Inspection evidence shows that standards are improving in Years 1 and 2 and currently, by the age of seven, pupils are attaining average standards in reading and below average

standards in writing, mathematics and science. The improvement seen on the 2004 national tests are due to the support provided by the headteacher and assessment coordinator to improve the rigour of assessments at age seven to ensure that information gathered about pupils' ability is accurate. Improvements in the use of assessment to ensure that pupils who are more able are sufficiently challenged to achieve as well as they can remains an issue in Years 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics and science. This lack of challenge for more able pupils is also seen in Years 3 and 4, where pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Satisfactory achievement in these year groups is attributed to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' achievement in Years 5 and 6 picks up as a result of improvements seen in the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, pupils attain standards that remain average in reading and below average in writing, mathematics and science. Given that children start school with skills that are well below what might be expected nationally, pupils have achieved well by the time they leave school at age 11. Overall, parents are pleased with their children's achievement.

4. Pupils' good achievement begins well in the reception class (the Foundation Stage). Staff work hard to ensure that children settle quickly into school. Children make good strides in their learning across all the areas of learning and by the end of their year in Reception, they are working towards the goals that children are expected to reach by this age. In spite of their progress, standards are still well below expectations in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. They are below expectations in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical and creative development. Children's very good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world prepares them well for their work in religious education, ICT and science as they move into Year 1.
5. Pupils throughout school achieve well in religious education and attain standards that meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' progress in ICT is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good over Years 3 – 6. As a result, pupils attain in line with expectations by the age of seven and above expectations by 11. In science, progress has not been as rapid. However, the school's focus on investigational science is now paying dividends and pupils' achievement in this area of the curriculum is much improved. Progress has also been made in English in developing pupils' skills of researching and retrieving information. This is now impacting positively on standards. Very good leadership in ICT and good leadership in English and science has much to do with improvements made in these subjects. Similarly, very good leadership of provision for special educational needs contributes very effectively to pupils' achievement.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school. The school provides support of high quality for these pupils within their usual classroom setting. This enables them to build confidence and self-esteem as they make good progress towards achieving the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Similarly, the very few pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language receive the benefits of the local education authority's support programme and staff, providing them with the specialist help they need in order to progress. The achievement of a small minority of pupils is adversely affected by their poor attendance. The school takes seriously this issue and is working hard with the families concerned, and external agencies, to combat the problems.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development is **good** and is supported effectively by the school's very good provision overall for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although the school has had to impose a fixed term exclusion, where problems with maintaining appropriate behaviour has been an issue, pupils' attitudes to school life are very good and their behaviour is good. Punctuality is satisfactory but attendance is **well below** the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and are well-motivated learners.
- There has been good improvement in pupils' behaviour.
- The provision for pupils' moral and cultural development is particularly strong.
- Relationships throughout the school community are very good.
- The school monitors and promotes attendance well but a minority of parents fail to support the school's efforts.

Commentary

7. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their school. When asked what they liked best about the school, Year 4 pupils replied, "everything". Pupils feel valued and cared for and particularly enjoy the numerous and varied clubs which the school provides. In lessons, they respond very well to good teaching by working hard and trying to do their best. Occasionally they become so interested and involved in their learning that they do not want a lesson to end. These very positive attitudes aid pupils' achievement very effectively.
8. There has been good improvement in behaviour since the last inspection, when the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils was noted as a key issue. The school sets very high and consistent expectations for behaviour and, as a result, most pupils behave very well both in lessons and around the school. Behaviour in assemblies is exceptionally good. Effective lunch-time routines mean that lunch is now a pleasant and calm part of the day and behaviour is generally good in the playground. A few pupils have problems managing their behaviour but the school has very effective strategies to meet their needs, including a successful course, which involves, pupils and their parents.
9. The school is very successful in the way that it teaches pupils to value and respect each others' feelings and as a result the school forms a happy and caring community. Each day starts with a carefully planned assembly which provides a very good opportunity for the community to celebrate together and for reflection on a range of issues. Pupils are encouraged to think about moral issues in lessons. In addition, the school provides good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities as play leaders, monitors or in the Eco Club.
10. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures. After-school clubs, theatre and museum visits, the community drama club and the visits of an artist in residence support cultural provision very effectively. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures in lessons and by celebrating different festivals, and through workshops such as one on African dance and drumming.
11. Most pupils are kind and considerate towards each other. A few parents expressed concerns about bullying through the parents' questionnaires and in letters. However, inspection evidence indicates that bullying is an infrequent occurrence and is always firmly dealt with. The school ethos strongly encourages kindness to others. For example, kindness is a regular topic in circle time. In conversation, Year 4 pupils admitted that they sometimes fall out with each other and this causes them upset, but if they are worried they tell a teacher and always "end by making up with each other".

Attendance

The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and attend regularly and punctually. The school monitors attendance very closely. It follows up all unexplained absences promptly and has good strategies such as class awards to encourage good attendance. The introduction of an Early Workers Club has helped to improve the punctuality of a few pupils. The reason for the school's poor attendance rate is that a small number of families do not ensure the regular attendance of their children. A high level of mobility amongst some families is also a significant contributory factor. The school, with the help of the education welfare officer and its family liaison officer, works hard with these families on attendance issues.

However, despite the school's efforts, the poor attendance of a small minority of pupils inevitably, and adversely, affects their achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92.7%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9	School data	0.4
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	401	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	63	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good** overall. Strengths include good teaching and learning, the positive partnerships established with parents, the very effective links established with other schools and colleges and the school's effective care for pupils' health, welfare and safety.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** and assessment is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment information is not consistently used in lessons to ensure that the needs of more able pupils are met effectively.
- Where teachers are used to share their expertise, teachers plan activities that motivate pupils to learn.
- Where teaching is good or better it is lively and full of fun.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the very good teaching of pupils who have special educational needs.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	10 (20%)	26 (53%)	12 (25%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

12. Teaching throughout the school is good overall. Where teaching is consistently good or better, lessons are imaginative and move at pace. A very good example of this is seen in the teaching of ICT, where the subject leader's expertise and enthusiasm for the subject oozed into the lesson and made it a memorable learning experience for all involved. Similarly, where the school uses subject specialists to teach their subject, as in music, the teacher's enthusiasm engaged all pupils in Year 5 very effectively as they were challenged to compose additional verses to a song. Pupils clearly enjoy such learning opportunities. Very good teaching and learning were seen elsewhere in school and similar very good qualities were observed. For example, in a mixed Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, the use of ICT was a key strength of the lesson and its vibrant atmosphere aided pupils' learning very effectively. This is not always the case, however.
13. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teaching is often satisfactory in some classes in Years 1 to 4 and this is because work is not consistently matched to the needs of pupils and, particularly, those who are more able, although this is not so evident in the teaching of English. In one lesson during the inspection lack of challenge and the ineffective management of pupils' behaviour resulted in their subsequent lack of achievement. The majority of teachers, however, use very good strategies to encourage pupils to behave well and lessons are characterised by teachers' high expectations and very good relationships. Parents agree that their children are well taught and also that, on occasions, they could 'do with more challenge'.
14. Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from very good support from teaching assistants. These assistants are very knowledgeable about pupils' individual education plans and are very familiar with the programmes they teach. This inspires confidence in pupils and provides a learning environment in which they can flourish. Some classes have high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and this can occasionally cause problems with behaviour management and the achievement of other groups of pupils. Teachers support pupils who have special needs effectively, making sure that the work planned allows pupils the opportunity to achieve well. Good understanding of pupils' needs enables teachers or teaching assistants to intervene at just the right moment. This is true especially for pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. Well-timed use of praise for such pupils leads them to feel good about their work and to want to achieve further.
15. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The school has an effective system in place to collect data and track pupils' progress. A strength of its use is in relation to those pupils who have special educational needs. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs starts in the lesson and is used carefully to help pupils take the next step in their learning. Targets in individual educational plans are clear and measurable. A comprehensive system for recording data about pupils with special educational needs enables teachers to have a clear and accurate picture of individual needs and hence to address them well. Assessment information, however, is not used consistently well by all teachers to meet the needs of more able pupils, particularly in mathematics and science. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects. Similarly, teachers' marking is inconsistent in quality and so pupils do not always know how best they should improve their work. It is at its best in Years 5 and 6, where teachers implement fully the school's new practices of always

identifying points for improvement. Teachers' discussions with pupils about their work during lessons, however, are purposeful and they help to raise pupils' self esteem and confidence.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** and opportunities to enrich it are **excellent**. The accommodation is **satisfactory** and learning resources are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum gives children a good start to their education.
- Provision for ICT in terms of the curriculum and resources is of high quality.
- There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities in which many pupils take part.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support both to pupils and teachers.

Commentary

16. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. There are stimulating activities set out in the classrooms for each of the areas of learning to ensure that children are provided with continuous opportunities to learn through play, supported by experienced and well informed staff. The planning takes full account of the early learning goals in each area of learning and is based on good, thorough assessment of what children need to learn next.
17. The school curriculum fully meets all statutory requirements, including those for teaching religious education and providing a daily act of worship. Local and national guidance is used and adapted appropriately to support curricular planning and meet the school's needs. Good emphasis is placed on the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy skills which are applied well across the curriculum. For example, pupils have many opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences. Also, to develop their numeracy skills through the use of graphs and charts as well as the opportunities to measure in science and design technology. The regular, well planned and imaginative use of ICT across the curriculum is exciting and is aiding the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding within this subject at a rapid rate. The numerous opportunities for pupil ensembles to perform in assembly and the enthusiastic groups of pupils who learn to play an extensive range of musical instruments, illustrate the school's commitment to provide its pupils with excellent opportunities for enrichment.
18. The school enriches and extends the curriculum through clubs, musical activities, theatre trips, sports teams, visits to a nearby swimming pool and to work alongside professional writers such as a Rasterfarian poet. Pupils benefit from the rich and varied programme of visits and visitors to the school. The visits and visitors are well chosen and have a strong link to the curriculum so that the relevance of many topics that pupils are learning is brought to life. These activities not only help to enrich the experiences of pupils but promote the development of an atmosphere where learning is seen by all to be exciting and enjoyable. Pupils and parents are very positive about the extra-curricular activities that school makes available for pupils to enjoy.
19. The arts and sports have a very high profile in the school. The imaginative approaches taken ensure that very high levels of interest are achieved both in the arts and a wide range of sports. The awards gained by the school such as the Activemark Gold and soon to be awarded Artsmark Gold are testament to the school's commitment to these areas of learning. The teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are rightly proud of these achievements.

20. The strength in provision for pupils with special educational needs lies in a combination of very good support and very good management and administration of this aspect of the curriculum. The good quality of individual education plans enables teachers and teaching assistants to provide pupils with very good support in lessons. As far as possible, pupils are taught alongside others in their classes and so are included fully in classroom life. Staff work sensitively alongside them. Teaching assistants are very knowledgeable. Every class teacher is responsible for monitoring pupils in their class, including those with special educational needs. Comprehensive, computerised records contain information about all aspects of support provided. Additional specialist support is provided for pupils at the second stage of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs.
21. The school makes good provision for pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The specialist support teacher provided by the local education authority receives the class teacher's planning for literacy and discusses this with the teacher, pointing out any areas of possible difficulty. This enables her to provide effective support in the lesson and for pupils to feel fully included in the work of the class
22. Teachers take every opportunity to promote pupils' personal and social skills through the curriculum. They are very skilled at developing pupils' personal qualities through their teaching and in other school activities, not only generally but also through personal, social, health and citizenship lessons (PSHCE). The teaching of sex and relationship education, the dangers of drugs and smoking and the importance of healthy eating feature effectively in the curriculum provision for PSHCE. In these sessions, pupils also have the chance to discuss feelings and beliefs and to tackle such issues as caring for the environment. The school has recently received the Eco-school Award for the second time in recognition of the work it does in respect of the environment. The school council and the range of opportunities for pupils to take part in such initiatives as the Children's Parliament offers good provision for pupils to develop citizenship skills and an awareness of democracy.
23. Whilst the school has no playing fields it does make very good use of its hard play area for games and playtimes. The accommodation overall is satisfactory. However, inspectors agree with parents that the mobile classrooms do not provide the same quality of learning environment as those offered by classrooms in the main school. The school has begun to tackle these issues, however, through repairs made to the roof and improvements to the toilet facilities. Learning resources and their use is good. All pupils are encouraged to make full use of the two very well-equipped computer bays.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very good** support and guidance for pupils. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are **good**. The school involves pupils well in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good caring relationships between staff and pupils.
- The school is very aware of pupils' personal circumstances and is very successful in targeting support to meet pupils' individual needs.
- The efficiently organised school council gives pupils a good voice in the running of their school.

Commentary

24. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils very well; they treat them as individuals and as a result pupils feel safe and are confident in seeking help when they are worried or upset. Arrangements for treating minor accidents are very good. Pupils with special physical needs are very well cared for and are well integrated in school life. The school has good child protection arrangements and health and safety procedures. Overall the school is clean and well-maintained but there is a significant difference in the quality of the environment experienced by pupils in the

main school and that experienced by pupils in the mobile classrooms. For example, it is difficult to control the temperature in these classrooms and pupils report that they are frequently too hot or too cold. Parents, too, expressed concerns about the well being of their children in the mobile classrooms.

25. The school is very aware that a significant number of pupils face difficulties that constitute a barrier to their learning and it has a very good range of well-targeted strategies for helping these pupils. For example, the family liaison officer runs circle time for small groups of pupils who lack self-esteem or who face other difficulties, and this helps to boost the confidence of many pupils. The work done by two Education Action Zone learning mentors is also highly valued by the school. Special clubs such as a skills club, a friendship club and homework clubs are carefully focused on meeting the specific needs of pupils.
26. The headteacher recognises that the problems faced by a number of parents inevitably affect their children and spill over into the school. She has been innovative and effective in seeking to support parents and children in tandem and has been able to do this through the excellent relationships the school has with a wide range of external agencies, including the Education Action Zone and 'Pressure Point'. The local authority behaviour support officer has run a successful course on 'emotional literacy' for parents and children. The very good help given to pupils who have behaviour problems, together with the school's carefully structured approach to behaviour management, are the main reasons for the good behaviour seen in the school. Parents are particularly grateful for the support provided, not only to their children but also to themselves.
27. Pupils value their school council, which gives them a good voice in school matters. Each class elects a representative who brings the classes' suggestions to council meetings and the school is responsive to pupils' ideas. The school council has helped in the development of the playground, and the special table for pupils who behave particularly well at lunch-time was introduced as a result of a request from the school council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and **very good** links with the community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information to parents is helpful and keeps parents well informed.
- The school works very effectively to increase parents' support for their children's learning.
- Very good links with the community and with other schools help to enrich pupils' learning well

Commentary

28. The school continues to have an effective partnership with parents. Parents value everything the school does for their children, and they particularly value the welcoming nature of the school and the approachability of staff. The school consults with parents well through annual questionnaires. It keeps parents well informed through a range of information including leaflets on the curriculum. Annual reports on pupils' progress give parents good information, on what their children can do and identify areas for improvement. Parents support the school in a number of ways, for example by helping in classrooms, with visits and with the 'walking bus'.
29. A minority of parents fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly and do not sufficiently support their children's learning at home. The school is highly committed to improving the support which parents give their children. It holds regular courses on numeracy, literacy and ICT for parents, and these are popular and well attended. Parents who attend these courses comment on how they help them to help their children. The 'Family Works' course is an innovative programme devised by the school that involves both parents and children. It has been so successful that it is now being used in many other Wirral schools. The school's partnership with parents is also

strengthened by the good support that the school gives to parents when they face difficulties. The family liaison officer has built up a very trusting and helpful relationship with parents and the new parents' room is valued and well used.

30. The very good support that the school is able to give, both to pupils and their families, has been achieved through the school's very successful liaison with external community agencies. The Education Action Zone supports a wide range of developments, including learning mentors, homework club and additional support for the curriculum, and it is highly valued by the school. Very good liaison with family support services such as 'Pressure Point' provides well-targeted help for families. The school is involved in various award schemes which are well supported by community agencies and which help to enrich pupils' learning. For example, involvement in the 'Eco Award' and the 'Civic Award' help pupils to learn about their responsibility for the environment and their responsibilities as citizens. Links with the community also help to support the excellent range of after-school clubs that the school provides.
31. The school has very good curriculum links in mathematics, science and ICT with the local secondary school. A secondary science teacher gives a course of science lessons to Year 6 pupils and a maths teacher gives after-school lessons to gifted pupils. Good links with local nursery schools and with several secondary schools enable the school to make good transition arrangements for pupils when they enter and leave the school. The school has particularly strong links with Oscars pre-school provision that is situated within the school grounds.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. Governance is **good**. The school is dealing well with identified aids and barriers to achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, supported capably by other senior staff, provides good leadership of the school community.
- Subject co-ordinators make an effective contribution to school improvement.
- The school monitors and evaluates its performance effectively.
- The governing body is effective in performing its duties.
- Good financial management contributes significantly to the process of school improvement.

Commentary

32. The headteacher, key staff and governing body work together well to lead and manage the school. They have a vision of a school in which each individual pupil matters and is valued and are striving hard to achieve this. A very strong commitment to inclusion – enabling each pupil to receive the best possible quality of education for their needs and as a full member of the school community – permeates the school's work. The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose and conveys this to all staff. She is very successful in building and maintaining a staff team whose members are valued equally for the part they play in providing a good quality of education. She places strong emphasis on developing links with outside agencies who become part of the extended staff team. In this way she seeks to aid learning, particularly in respect of removing barriers that are associated with difficulties with language, low self esteem and special educational need. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership of teaching and the curriculum through tight monitoring of staff's work whilst also making staff feel valued. The continued good management of the school, despite the recent lack of a deputy head and with the long-term absence of a senior manager, indicates the strength and effectiveness of the headteacher's leadership.
33. The headteacher is committed to shared management and to this end, she places great importance on developing the skills of other school managers. The strength and good organisation of the school's senior leadership group bears witness to her success. The team

has a good balance of skills and its members set a good example to other staff by the quality of their own classroom practice. Team members are knowledgeable about the school, know their roles and responsibilities well and are clear about what needs to be done in order to continue improving the quality of education the school provides. They give a good lead in putting this into practice.

34. A good example of the strength of school management and quality of team work amongst staff lies in the fact that, for much of the year, the co-ordinator for special educational needs has been absent through unforeseen circumstances. During this time two other members of staff are taking shared responsibility for managing special educational needs, under the guidance of the headteacher. This very effective arrangement has ensured that the management of special educational needs continues to run smoothly.
35. The school evaluates its performance accurately. Performance data is analysed carefully and effective action is taken as a result. The headteacher and other senior managers observe teaching and provide feedback to individual teachers. All this contributes to an ethos of improvement, built upon the sure foundations of very good relationships and care for pupils.
36. The assessment of staff's professional performance is tightly managed and plays a significant role in the drive to raise standards. Some of the targets set by this process relate to whole-school priorities and are shared by all staff. They relate also to some of the priorities expressed in the school development plan. This is a detailed and informative document that provides evidence of the high expectations that managers should focus clearly upon actions for improvement, although it lacks a sharp focus on the two or three main priorities for improvement.
37. Subject co-ordinators carry out their duties conscientiously and effectively. They are knowledgeable about their subjects and clear about strengths and weaknesses within them. Co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science, along with the headteacher and other senior managers, analyse performance data closely and, as a result, take effective action to try to raise standards.
38. The governing body has a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Its members bring to the school a wide variety of skills and understanding which enable them to support and challenge senior managers effectively. A well established programme of visits by governors to classes is an integral part of the governing body's strategy for keeping up-to-date with school practice. The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties, for example in the way that it works in partnership with the headteacher to implement and monitor the school's Race Relations Policy.
39. Having particular expertise in financial management helps the governing body to manage the school's budget prudently but in a way that gives subject co-ordinators and other managers the opportunity to manage monies for their particular areas of responsibility. As a result, financial management is good, helping the school to address its educational priorities. The governing body ensures that staffing levels are as generous as is possible in order to promote school improvement. Governors and school managers are conscientious in trying to apply the principles of best value to their work. Day-to day financial management is good. School office staff are very efficient in daily administration.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1272070	Balance from previous year	136169
Total expenditure	1119451	Balance carried forward to the next	152619
Expenditure per pupil	2266		

40. The school has carried forward a significant under-spend in its budget. Approximately one third of this has since been used to pay for state-of-the-art 'smart boards' to support ICT and other subjects. This equipment is being used well in lessons and represents a good investment. The rest of the under spend is earmarked for extending Internet access to the school's temporary classrooms and for building work. This usage is satisfactory.
41. The cost of educating pupils at the school is below average. Given pupils' good achievement, together with good teaching overall, a good quality of education and strong pastoral care, the school provides good value for money. The strength of its staff team, the good quality of leadership and management, strengths in pastoral education and in links with the community mean that the school is well placed to continue to improve.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall and has improved since the last inspection, an example of which is seen in the new purpose built playground for the reception children, which has enhanced outdoor provision. Children enter the reception classes in the September before their fifth birthday. The standard of attainment on entry is well below average, although there are variations in the natural abilities of each group. Most of the children enter the reception class with nursery experience. Good teaching and the organisation of a wide range of exciting and well-planned activities enable the children to achieve well in all areas of learning, which helps them to make a good start to their school life. Planning and assessment are good. Teachers and support staff monitor carefully the progress children make. Very good provision is made for those children with special educational needs and these children make good progress over time. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been fully established with the staff introducing a more child centred approach to learning. Assessment is properly undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the 'Foundation Stage Profile'. Tracking of the children's progress is also developing well. The good quality provision and effective teamwork are having a positive impact on children's learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good** overall

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are happy in school because of the good induction programme and the support, care and respect shown for each child.
- Clear routines are established quickly and are understood by children. As a result, they develop positive attitudes towards learning.
- Staff provide a wide range of structured activities to enhance personal, social and emotional development enabling the children to develop confidence and independence and to work well co-operatively.

Commentary

43. When the children start in the reception class their personal, emotional and social skills are well below those expected for this age group. A small but significant minority of the new entrants lack confidence, especially when interacting with adults, but also in using resources independently and playing with other children co-operatively. Staff place great emphasis on the development of independent skills, and as a result of good teaching and their effective intervention, children achieve well in this area of learning, and within a very short space of time.

44. Through role-play and activities the children learn how to co-operate and persevere in their tasks. The children respond well to the clear routines and many settle with the minimum of fuss. Priority is given to allowing the children to develop their social skills through structured play. By the time they leave the reception year the majority can share and take turns. For example, children waited patiently to be served in the 'garden centre' role-play area as others enjoyed the opportunity to sell their goods and carefully wrap them for their 'customers'. The staff have high expectations of behaviour to which the children respond very well. However, a significant minority find it difficult to concentrate and work independently. At all times, children's confidence is boosted well by praise and encouragement. As a result, children achieve well. Although the majority are not likely to

meet the standards expected by the time they leave the Foundation Stage, they are making good progress towards meeting expectations for their age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers and support staff plan a wide range of activities to develop children's language and communication skills.
- Opportunities to challenge the more able children in reading and writing are developed well.

Commentary

45. Although attainment on entry is well below average, especially in speaking and listening, good teaching enables the children to achieve well. When the children start school a small but significant number experience speech and language delay, and many lack confidence in articulating their thoughts. The development of communication skills is a high priority in the reception classes, with every opportunity taken to encourage the children to talk and listen. This is having a positive impact. Already children are making good progress as a result of the many opportunities to talk and listen; the majority can speak with more confidence. However, early indications are that the majority of children will not meet the expectations in this area of learning by the end of their year in Reception, and their skills will remain well below what might be expected of their age. Many of the children display poor listening skills, lacking the ability to concentrate for long. This was particularly noticeable in a physical education lesson when children found it hard to listen carefully to instructions. Staff take every opportunity during activities to develop the children's vocabulary. For example, when the children were looking at an ostrich egg the teacher continually chatted to the children, asking them questions so they could think and describe what they could see.
46. On entry to the reception class, a small number of children have a wide experience of reading books for enjoyment. However, the majority have reading skills well below those expected for this age group. The development of reading skills is a high priority and as a result, the children make good progress. For example, all the children enjoy reading activities. The majority are developing their knowledge of letters sounds. Support staff and voluntary helpers ably support the teaching of reading. Through the home reading scheme and loan of story sacks the parents are also involved. The new reading scheme has yet to have a significant impact on learning. The more able achieve well when they use their knowledge of letters, sounds and words when reading text. However, a significant number of children are still acquiring these skills.
47. The practise of early writing skills is included in many activities, especially for the more able children who are encouraged to write lists, letters and stories. For example, when writing the 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' story, the children completed their booklets with enthusiasm and confidence, demonstrating good early writing skills. These children are achieving well. However, many of the children have yet to develop satisfactory pencil control, letter formation, and an ability to record and communicate their thoughts.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good** overall

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for developing numeracy skills are integrated into many activities.
- A range of teaching strategies is used to encourage mathematical development.

Commentary

48. Few activities were seen with mathematics as the core activity. However, initial assessments show that the children's mathematical development is well below that expected for this age on entry to school. From the work seen the children are achieving well. They respond effectively to the wide range of practical games and activities to develop mathematical skills and understanding and that underpin good teaching and learning. Singing rhymes are used to good effect. For example, the children confidently joined in the singing game of 'Five Little Speckled Frogs'. The majority of children are secure in recognising numbers and counting on and in sequence to 5. The more able children count to 20 and beyond. However, their mathematical development in adding is less secure. Although the children are achieving well, it is unlikely the majority will reach the standards expected before they leave the Foundation Stage of learning, and many will remain well below expectations for their age.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a wide range of activities and experiences to develop curiosity and interest.
- Very good opportunities for imaginative play helps children's learning
- Cultural development is very good.
- Children are confident when using computers.

Commentary

49. Although attainment on entry is well below that expected for this age group the children are achieving very well. Teaching and learning is very good overall, with some very good group work seen. Staff provide a wide range of exciting, well-structured activities to widen the children's experience and to develop their knowledge and understanding. The children demonstrate a curiosity and a keen interest in objects and living things. For example, they were very keen to share their interest in the chicks incubating in the classroom. The teachers use both common place and unusual objects to develop observational skills. Good cross-curricular links are developed through imaginative play; for example, the Garden Centre provides very good links with the environmental topic on 'Spring-time'. The development of cultural awareness is also very important. The children take part in a wide range of activities to develop their understanding of different cultures and beliefs. For example, when celebrating the Chinese New Year the children performed a dragon dance and enjoyed eating with chopsticks. The children are developing good computer skills and use the mouse and keyboard well. They use a paint program to draw pictures and move the cursor to around a maze with confidence. Despite achieving very well, the majority are unlikely to reach the early goals expected by the end of the reception class because of their low starting point.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdoor provision contributes well to children's physical development.
- A good range of activities is available to develop the children's fine motor skills effectively.

Commentary

50. Provision in the outdoor area is good and includes a wide range of opportunities to support children's developing skills. Outdoor provision includes activities such as dressing up, a puppet theatre, large climbing frame, bats and balls, stilts, construction toys and water play. Children clearly enjoy these activities and this aids their learning and good achievement.
51. Teaching and learning is good in this area of learning and so aids well the development of the children's manipulative skills. In the classrooms, a good range of activities is available to develop the children's fine motor skills through the use of scissors, paintbrushes, pencils, crayons and small construction equipment. Children clearly enjoy these activities and try hard to achieve their best. Children also have the opportunity to go into the hall for physical education lessons. During a gymnastics lesson they demonstrated the ability to travel, change direction, skip and jump. Although children achieve well, the majority are unlikely to reach the early goals expected by the end of the reception class because of their starting point, which is lower than might be expected for their age.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good** overall

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's creativity is developed well through a stimulating range of activities.
- Very good links are made to other areas of learning to aid children's achievement.

Commentary

52. Teaching and learning is never less than good in this area of learning and the quality of planned experiences for children's development enables their good achievement. The children make good progress as a result of a good range of creative activities. The teachers have adapted well the classrooms and outdoor play areas to ensure the children have an opportunity to explore media and materials, participate in music, and develop their imagination and creativity. There are very good links to the other areas of learning. For example, during a topic on Springtime the children created paintings, collages and drawings of caterpillars, butterflies and frogs to very good effect. The teachers create a rich learning environment as they display very effectively the creative achievements of the children. The children enjoy playing with percussion instruments and sing well during structured activities. Although standards overall are below those expected for this age a significant minority are working well towards the Early Learning Goal that they are expected to reach by the end of their year in reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school because teachers provide work that challenges them.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils underpin successful teaching.
- Teaching assistants play a very important part in helping pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- The subject co-ordinator's knowledge and good planning have a positive impact on subject development.

Commentary

53. Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved since the national tests in 2004 were taken. They are now average in reading and below average in writing. As pupils begin Year 1 with attainment that is well below average overall, they make very good progress in reading and good progress in writing across Years 1 and 2. The reasons for this lie in good teaching and, with regard to reading, in the effective way that the school structures reading sessions.
54. Most recent National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 showed attainment to be average when compared with all schools. Attainment was also average when pupils' test scores were compared with those of other pupils nationally who had similar scores in their Year 2 tests. This year, standards at the end of Year 6 are below average overall although standards in reading are average. However, whilst standards are judged to be below average overall, they come close to average. The strength of teaching in Year 6 means that the school is likely to exceed its expectation of how many pupils should achieve the higher National Curriculum Level 5.
55. Teaching is good overall. As a result, pupils are motivated to work hard and this leads to good achievement. At the start of each lesson the teacher highlights on a whiteboard or 'smart' board what is to be learnt so that pupils are very clear about this and, as a result, they understand what they are doing and do it well. Work is very well planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Largely, these plans are translated into successful practice so that pupils of all attainments achieve well although occasionally in Year 3 higher attaining pupils could be given more challenging work. Throughout the school, teachers form very good relationships with their pupils, thus establishing a climate in which pupils want to learn. Pupils' behaviour is mostly managed very well, although very occasionally in Year 3, weakness in behaviour management leads to pupils becoming restless and inattentive and they make little progress.
56. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because work is planned to match closely their individual learning targets and they are very well supported and guided in their work by teaching assistants and teachers. The quality of the work of teaching assistants is a major reason why these pupils do well.
57. Teaching is stronger overall in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2, where occasional lapses in managing the work of small groups of pupils leads to achievement being no more than satisfactory. The strongest teaching is in Year 6, where very good relationships are combined with high expectations and result in pupils enjoying learning greatly whilst being stretched to achieve very well. Marking of work is conscientious throughout the school but it is more challenging and more effective in Years 5 and 6, where teachers implement fully the school's new practices of always identifying points for improvement.
58. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership. She is well aware of the progress being made to improve standards. She has worked effectively to lead improvement in the

development of pupils' skills of researching and retrieving information. This is now bearing fruit in standards attained. Her match of resources to curriculum needs is also influencing the work of teachers positively.

59. Standards are higher now than at the time of the last inspection. Issues raised at that time, relating to the development of research skills and the lack of opportunities for pupils to extend their skills into other subjects, have been addressed successfully. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. The school makes good provision to enable pupils to develop their language skills in other subjects. These include links to science, for example in Year 1, when pupils studied a mango after reading from a book, 'The Mango Tree'. A comprehensive plan of curriculum links has been made between literacy and ICT. This includes the use of the recently purchased interactive white boards. In a Year 2 class, one of these boards was used to show pictures and writing about the life of Florence Nightingale as the focus of a history lesson. In religious education, pupils write about festivals in different world faiths.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in maths is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical activities and lively and well-organised mental exercises at the beginning of lessons stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and interest and aid their achievement.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support for the teaching of mathematics within the classroom.
- New ICT resources are used well by teachers to aid teaching and learning.
- Higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged.

Commentary

61. Pupils' achieve well over time in mathematics because teaching is good. The effective use of the national Numeracy Strategy provides a good framework for pupils to build up and practise their number skills. Lively and well organised mental warm ups at the beginning of lessons stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and interest, for example when Year 6 pupils are challenged to work out as many equivalent fractions as possible within a strictly timed session. Teachers give good emphasis to the development of mathematical understanding. As a result, although standards of attainment are below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, given the low starting point when pupils join Year 1, their achievement is good overall. However, in Years 3 and 4, the achievement of the majority of pupils is satisfactory. This is because insufficient challenge is offered. Pupils' work shows that many pupils, other than those with special educational needs, complete unnecessary 'consolidation' work, which pupils already understand, before they move on to tasks that are more challenging. This slows their progress and, in this part of the school, results in levels of achievement being lower than expected.
62. Good teaching is characterised by teachers who have good subject knowledge. Where teaching is good or better, teachers plan a positive range of practical activities within lessons and, as a result, pupils want to learn and find learning enjoyable. Effective teaching is also characterised by good pace and timing of sessions. This results in a well-judged allocation of time for the teaching of specific concepts and strategies to the whole class and groups whilst allowing sufficient time for the significant majority of pupils to complete the work set for them. The use of recently installed interactive whiteboards and data projectors is also aiding teaching and learning well. For example, one Year 2 teacher and her pupils used

them particularly well and confidently to enhance and enrich a lesson on symmetry. Clear directions regarding activities ensured that pupils knew what they were aiming to achieve. This confident and lively approach keeps pupils motivated and involved. Similarly, experienced and skilled teaching assistants give pupils with special educational needs very good support in small groups, which results in their full involvement and good achievement.

63. Pupils have clear targets to help them understand what they need to learn to improve. Teachers increasingly assess what pupils are learning against agreed objectives so that they can carefully track progress over time. However, assessment is not used sufficiently well throughout the school to present more able pupils with more challenging activities. Pupils show mastery over a range of strategies to record their work but only very few show an understanding of short written methods of calculation. These methods can be demanding of time and as a result slow their progress down. The lack of opportunities for the more able pupils to be engaged in problem solving is also contributing to the lack of challenge being provided. Overall, this limits their chances of achieving at the higher levels and reduces the school's opportunities of raising standards in mathematics further.
64. The coordinator for mathematics is fairly new to her role and, as such, provides satisfactory leadership and management of the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. There is good use of mathematics across the curriculum. Pupils use a range of standard and non-standard measures in science, and mathematical skills are used well in art and design when pupils apply their knowledge and understanding of symmetry in their patterns. Links with ICT are good, for example in the collection of data to produce bar and pie charts and the use of mathematical formula in their work on spreadsheets.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment is not effectively used to ensure that more able pupils are challenged consistently to achieve as well as they can.
- An improved focus on investigational science is aiding pupils' achievement.
- The recently adopted scheme of work has increased teachers' confidence in investigational work.
- Effective external links have been established to enhance the curriculum.

Commentary

66. Standards in science are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, pupils' achievement in relation to their low starting point is good over time. Good teaching and carefully structured investigative activities are key factors in pupils' achievement. More able pupils, however, do not consistently achieve as well as they should. Similarly, an analysis of pupils' work shows that the achievement of many pupils in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory and this is mainly due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. In both cases, whilst assessment strategies for the subject are good, the information gathered is not used consistently or well enough to ensure that pupils' needs are met. In Years 5 and 6, however, achievement is good owing to consistently good teaching and a clear emphasis on investigational activities.
67. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers make very good use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are well informed and use a range of good questioning skills to extend pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs are

particularly well supported by teaching assistants and make good progress and achieve well. Projects are well prepared and resourced by teachers, which results in pupils having many opportunities to test ideas and to hypothesise. Teachers are very careful to highlight technical vocabulary for pupils and this makes a strong contribution to their language development. For example, the teacher in Year 2 very effectively used story and computer demonstration to generate pupil enthusiasm for a germination project. Other features of good teaching include practical activities and high level pupil involvement, such as in Year 5 where the teacher used pupils and various spheres to model the movement of the planets of the solar system. Such pupil cooperation is further exemplified in Year 6, where group work is developing very well. In discussion with Year 6 pupils they expressed high levels of enthusiasm for their learning experiences in science. They were able to recall a wide range of projects and it is clear that the emphasis on investigation has helped to embed their learning. Teachers consistently mark pupils' work but marking is mainly encouraging and does not sufficiently challenge pupils to do better. However, homework is used well by teachers to reinforce learning and to kick-start projects through pupil research.

68. The introduction of the new Wirral scheme of work has had a significant impact on the confidence of teachers to prepare and teach investigational activities. As a result, pupils raise questions, plan investigations, select resources and predict results. For example, pupils in Year 2 investigate the relationship between height and the ability to run fast; Year 4 pupils measure the insulation qualities of a variety of materials, whilst in Year 5, pupils have studied the relationship between arm length and leg length. All investigations are characterised by the good use of numeracy skills typified by accurate measurement and the displaying of results in graph format.

69. The leadership of the subject is good. The coordinator has worked hard to secure good improvement in the subject since the last inspection; she is now effectively involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning. The coordinator has also established positive links with personnel from the local education authority and with secondary schools to support improvement. For example, she was actively involved in the preparation of the Wirral's science scheme of work and currently a secondary school science specialist comes into school to run 'booster' classes for groups of Year 6 pupils. This expertise makes a good contribution to curriculum provision and pupils' achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership of the subject has enabled significant improvements to be made in ICT provision.
- There is a rich ICT curriculum enhanced by very good resources.
- Staff are confident in teaching ICT and this has contributed to improvements made in teaching and learning.
- Pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment for ICT aids their achievement.
- The dedicated ICT teaching assistant makes a significant contribution to teaching and learning.

Commentary

70. Standards have risen in ICT since the last inspection because teachers are much more confident teaching the requirements of the national curriculum than they were. In addition, resources have substantially improved. The well resourced computer bays, to which pupils have regular access during lessons and at break times, and the carefully chosen software are good examples of these improvements. A key factor in the subject's improvement is the very good leadership of the subject coordinator. Leadership of the subject is very good and

management is good. The very effective leadership has focused attention at the correct areas to be improved. Good analysis of areas of weakness in teachers' skills and knowledge has been used to introduce good training and support with an increasing range of resources. Good monitoring procedures are in place and are used effectively to identify any gaps in provision or dips in standards. This provides information which the subject leader uses to plan for the ongoing development of ICT throughout the school.

71. As a result of these developments, the quality of teaching is now stronger; in Years 1 and 2 it is good and in Years 3 to 6, it is consistently very good. Staff are confident to use the computer themselves and in this they act as good role models for pupils. For example, during lessons good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to demonstrate to pupils a range of teaching points and to make clear the sequencing of program operations. This raises pupils' understanding and attainment. Teachers give clear instructions and explanations and provide a wide range of stimulating and effective activities which motivate the pupils extremely well. The support offered by the dedicated ICT teaching assistant is very good. Her expertise and knowledge of the subject, the curriculum and pupils, provides valuable assistance and promotes the rate of progress pupils make in their lessons.
72. The outcome of these improvements is the pupils' achievement and the standards that they attain. By the end of Year 2 pupils attain in line with expectations and by the end of Year 6 standards are above expectations; this equates to very good achievement over time. Another factor in pupils' improved achievement is that they enjoy using computers. They show high levels of confidence and competence in using them to support their learning across the curriculum. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use ICT to organise and present their work in a limited but interesting way in a range of subjects. Lively programs stimulate pupils' interest so that they learn at a good rate. Pupils write simple text to the screen and save and print their work. They alter the font style, size and colour of the print for emphasis and effect. In art they select appropriate tools to draw and fill shapes and create pictures with a range of textures. By the end of Year 6 pupils use a wide range of skills in ICT to support their learning across a range of subjects. They use 'LOGO' and a range of other control programs to develop their skills of control and modelling. For example, they use 'LOGO' to produce sequences of instructions to control robot devices. This is further developed in other areas of control technology, such as the formulation of complex flow charts and instructions to replicate the operation of a lighthouse relative to weather conditions and the time of day. Pupils confidently demonstrate their high level of competence in a wide range of ICT related skills. For example, they use computer aided design software to design and cost out home improvements and create multi-media presentations incorporating a range of visual images, static and moving text and sound.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. ICT is used regularly and frequently throughout the school to promote learning across the curriculum. For example, pupils often use word processing to record their work in a range of subjects, spreadsheets in mathematics, bar and pie graphs in science and geography, paint and draw programs in art and computer aided design packages in design technology.

HUMANITIES

74. Insufficient evidence was available during the time of the inspection to make secure judgements on the provision for history and geography. As a result, these subjects have been sampled.
75. In the **history** lessons seen, the quality of teaching was mostly good and never less than satisfactory. The school's approach to the subject is to provide 'hands-on' experiences and to draw out from these as much learning as possible for its pupils. In addition, it strives to create a climate where several subject skills are brought together in one or a series of

lessons, enriching learning in history whilst developing skills in other subjects as well. Year 6 pupils have recently visited a Victorian hall in Wales. Their experiences had clearly energised them and they were keen to demonstrate the knowledge they had gained. After discussion about a servant's life in such a hall, pupils wrote letters in the style of a Victorian maid. They worked hard and achieved good results. Good use of resources led to pupils in Year 4 examining copies of Egyptian artefacts as a stimulus to find out more about Ancient Egyptian life. They were keen to discover further information from research and achieved well in so doing. Good use of an interactive white board and good links with the National Literacy Strategy helped pupils in Year 2 to develop their skills of literacy as well as improving their historical knowledge. Strong links with art were evident in work about the Tudors completed by Year 5 pupils and displayed on the wall.

76. Only one **geography** lesson was seen during the inspection so it is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision. However, evidence from pupils' work, displays and talking to pupils indicates that the school works hard to provide an interesting curriculum that pupils will enjoy. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 learn about mapping and link this aspect of their work well with the community the school serves. They also learn what weather symbols mean. In Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to develop their understanding of different environments, such as mountain ranges, and their knowledge of the water cycle and the various sources of water. Some of this work has been linked well to other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils have adapted their knowledge and understanding of the weather conditions prevalent in the Antarctic to write their own diaries in the style of Captain Scott.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for religious education is effective and followed well to promote pupils' good attitudes to religious belief.
- Where teaching is good or better, opportunities for discussion and reflection aid pupils' understanding of different faiths.

Commentary

77. Pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage in beginning to learn about the world about them and their place in it. This good achievement continues in Years 1 and 2. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding is in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for their age. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress and, pupils in Year 6 achieve standards in line with expectations for their age. One of the reasons for pupils' good achievement is because the curriculum that is followed throughout school is well planned so that pupils' understanding of different religious beliefs is developed gradually and purposefully.
78. Teachers ensure that pupils have a basic knowledge of the main world religions and so their understanding of Christianity in Year 1, developed through Bible Stories such as 'The feeding of the 5000' and 'the Easter Story', is built upon well in Year 2. For example, in Year 2 the study of Hinduism focuses on festivals such as the 'Festival of Divali' and pupils consider ways in which other cultures and faiths celebrate, for example the Chinese New Year. As pupils move through Years 3 to 6 they continue to study Christianity alongside another religion. For example, pupils in Year 4 compare the 'Christmas Journey' of the shepherds and the Wise Men to the pilgrimage 'Hajj' made by Muslims to Mecca. These opportunities for pupils to consider the similarities and differences between faiths are good and, by the time pupils are in Year 6, they are well prepared to consider some thought-provoking issues. For example, that of labour camps used in World War 2 and their

similarities as seen through the eyes of 'Corrie ten Boom' and 'Ann Frank', giving both a Christian and Jewish perspective.

79. Teaching is good overall. Where lessons were seen to be good and very good, pupils listened well, they were interested and open-minded. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson that was very good, the teacher introduced very well the concept of the 'Four Noble Truths' of Buddhism by carefully exploring the concept of 'need' as opposed to 'want'. Although this was potentially a difficult point for pupils to grasp and to compare, the teacher's skill enabled the pupils to gain much from the lesson. Resources to support their thinking were very well used, such as Tibetan music and Buddha images and so the lesson was brought to life. In this lesson achievement was very good. Where teaching is satisfactory, as seen in some pupils' work and lessons, more challenge for pupils' who are more able was required to promote their thinking still further.
80. Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The subject leader provides positive support for teachers and has organised the scheme of work well. A clear focus on the achievement of different groups of pupils is yet to be developed and the coordinator has rightly acknowledged that further development is required to link pupils' study with their own experiences. Religious education is a subject for which the subject leader has much enthusiasm and for which she is positively committed to further develop her own expertise.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

81. In art and design, design and technology and physical education, insufficient evidence was available during the time of the inspection to enable overall judgements on provision and standards to be made.
82. It is evident from a sample of pupils' work and teachers' planning that **art and design** plays an important part in the school curriculum. Teachers' expertise and confidence in the subject have improved through working with an advisory teacher from the local education authority (LEA). Teachers are also effectively guided through the curriculum by a comprehensive scheme of work that has been developed by the subject leader, who in turn monitors the quality of projects. Art and design contributes effectively to the school's provision for spiritual and cultural development. Year 1 pupils' work indicates that when producing self-portraits they consider the mood, setting and the work of artists. Year 4 landscapes are produced following a park visit and a study of Seurat's work. Year 5 abstract water scenes express feelings, thoughts and reflect the work of Claude Monet. The designs of Year 6 pupils are based on the work of William Morris and a study of flowers. Art and design also makes a significant contribution to the enrichment of the curriculum. Clubs are provided for pupils in both art skills and textiles. The textiles club produces toys for Romanian children. The school is also participating in a photographic competition and many pupils have received awards, whilst the LEA's 'Red Bus' enables the school to provide art gallery visits for pupils. The world of commerce is also 'touched' as pupils' works of art from pre-Christmas projects are sold. This enriched range of activities has enabled the school to progress towards the gold stage of the 'Artsmark' award.
83. No lessons were observed in **design and technology** during the inspection. However, evidence gathered from pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that curriculum coverage for the subject is broad and balanced. Links with external agencies enhance provision, for example by working with the LEA to boost teachers' expertise and with engineers from the local community who have worked with Year 5 pupils to produce controlled vehicles. Three pupils have reached the 'Wirral design' finals. Pupils have access to resources and expertise at the 'Learning Lighthouse' and use this resource to support work during their study of a 'fairground'. The school also has access to a 'CAD/CAM' unit and further engineering units are planned. Pupils' work shows that there are good cross-curricular links with literacy through instructional writing and asking pertinent questions. For instance, in Year 4, whilst designing money containers, pupils raise questions that address key issues such as, 'Who is going to use the container?' 'What must it hold?' 'How can it be carried?'

The subject is well resourced and this helps pupils to be successful in their work, for example in Year 2, where pupils work with textiles to produce puppets and in Year 6, where pupils design a range of fashionable headwear.

84. No lessons were seen in **physical education**. However, from teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils it is evident that all strands of the subject, including outdoor and adventurous activities are regularly taught. There is every indication that physical education is very strong throughout the school. The pupils can join in a wide range of sporting activities both in lessons and in the excellent extra-curricular activities with both boys and girls having access to the same sports. The school is fully involved in the School Sport Partnership with the local high and primary schools. In their aim to raise standards the teachers, with the support of the partnership co-ordinator and specialist teachers, have introduced a wide range of successful activities to engage the pupils, including yoga, judo, hockey, basketball, sailing and tennis. Through the partnership the teachers have received training and extra resources. The children also successfully take part in a wide range of inter-school and community sports competitions. The school has worked hard to introduce greater participation in physical activity at lunchtime with the successful introduction of the Active Playground Scheme. In recognition of the excellent sport and physical education provision the school has recently been awarded the Activemark – Gold standard. Physical education is very well led and managed by a well-qualified subject leader who is dynamic, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. He has a very clear overview of the standards in the subject and is very keen to develop this further through the introduction of a new scheme of work. Although the pupils do not have access to a school field the staff have worked very hard and imaginatively to adapt the outdoor facilities to encourage physical activity. All the play areas are zoned for different activities and have been upgraded with very good wall and floor markings. For example, in the Year 1 playground, pupils have their own running track and obstacle course. The pupils also have access to a wide range of small apparatus well organised by the Year 6 pupils at playtimes.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is helped by the subject leader's ability to challenge and inspire the pupils.
- The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of musical opportunities.
- Very good links have been established with the music services to provide a wide range of instrumental provision.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to perform within and outside school.

Commentary

85. Music, as part of the creative arts, holds a strong place in the life of the school. The subject leader leads with strength and enthusiasm. This is clearly demonstrated in lessons and in assemblies when she accompanies pupils in their singing and music making. The subject leader also takes music lessons in other classes and her expertise, plus the confidence of other staff, enables pupils to achieve well.

86. Teaching throughout school is good overall. Teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. However, all teachers displayed an enthusiasm for the subject, which promoted pupils' very positive attitudes to their learning. Where teaching was good, for example in Year 2, the teacher showed that she had high expectations of pupils to listen very well to the music being played. This was important, given that pupils had to learn a new song and accompany some music with their home made instruments. Their emerging skills in rhythm, beat and timing showed that pupils achieved well in identifying different musical sounds and

rhythm. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards in line with expectations. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are taught by the subject leader and her very good subject knowledge aids teaching and learning. In a very good Year 5 lesson, pupils held their different rhythms in their minds so that, when brought in by the teacher, they played their part of the orchestration well. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated similar skills and in a good music lesson they were able to appreciate the difference between a bass and a melody line. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are in line with expectations for their age.

87. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular music activities where pupils have the opportunity to develop their skills, for example in choir, recorder and hand bells. Other opportunities come through very good links with the peripatetic teachers who provide instrumental tuition for brass, woodwind and strings. The school places a good emphasis on performing. Pupils' skills and abilities are celebrated with regularity and once a week in assembly, pupils can play for the rest of the school. During the inspection it was the turn of pupils who play hand bells and the choir to share their expertise. All the pupils have an opportunity to perform in front of the school, their parents or wider community in concerts. Similarly, pupils are taken out of school to attend concerts, for example at the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool. The school is working successfully towards the 'Artsmark Gold' standard in recognition of standards in the arts, and this includes the school's achievements in music.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **good** and pupils achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good links are established with partners beyond school. This develops pupils' awareness of what it means to be a good citizen.
- A clear focus on discussion in lessons enables pupils to reflect and develop positive life skills.

Commentary

88. Pupils' personal development is good and is underpinned by the school's very good ethos and the very good commitment of the school's leaders to inclusion. Very good links are established with partners beyond the school, with the local community and other external agencies and these are used very well to enhance pupils' development. This is demonstrated, for example, in the creation of opportunities for pupils to work towards 'Civic awards', which pupils receive from the Mayor. Such work, coupled with an effective school council, enables pupils to develop a good understanding of what it means to live in a school community.

89. Teaching is good overall and pupils achieve well as a result. Teachers are skilled at developing pupils' personal qualities through their general teaching and through discrete PSHCE lessons and circle time. Through such provision pupils are provided with chances to discuss feelings and beliefs such as caring for one another and developing skills such as empathy. For example, pupils in a Year 1 lesson considered the importance of wearing glasses; as the teacher pointed out, she would be unable to read without them. The story that followed was listened to attentively and pupils showed empathy when the 'duck' in the story was sad. Older pupils are helped to develop their independence by considering how to budget carefully for something they might want to buy. They considered moral issues that arose about the principle of donating to charity from a small budget.

90. The subject is led and managed well. Clear guidance has been drawn up for teachers to follow that enables the curriculum to be purposeful and cross-curricular, and that includes moral and social issues. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' drugs awareness from

an early age, and sex and relationships education is carefully planned. The subject leader has worked hard with external agencies to promote healthy eating and in the compilation of the school's 'travel plan'. This is a particularly successful initiative and a high percentage of pupils now walk to school as part of the 'Walking Bus'. Money is raised for charities, and care and respect for others is developed in this way beyond school. The school's outward view is successful in raising pupils' awareness of living in a wider community whilst, within the school community, the development of such qualities is carefully linked to the strategy for promoting and rewarding care, respect and good behaviour.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).